1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

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PARSHAS KI SAVO – THE MAZE

From the Archives of Rabbi Caplan on the Parsha

One of the afflictions enumerated in the *tochacha* in this week's Parsha states, "You will grope about at noontime like a blind man gropes in the darkness" (Devarim 28,29). Said Rebbi Yossi, "My whole life I was bothered by this *pasuk*. What difference is there to a blind man whether it is dark or bright? Until the following event [revealed to me its explanation]: I was walking on the darkest of nights and I saw a blind man with a torch in his hand. I asked him what the torch was for. He answered, that as long as he was holding the torch people will see him and save him from stumbling into any hazards" (Maseches Megilla 24b).

Rabbi Shmuel David Walkin presented this story as an analogy in his eulogy for the Chofetz Chaim. "Do we realize who the Chafetz Chaim was? Do we comprehend what we have lost with his passing? We are like blind people and he was our torch. Just as a torch in the hand of a blind man allows sighted people to save him from any danger, so does the tzaddik – due to his awesome merit – protect his generation from tragedies and catastrophes. But this torch not only saves others from physical pitfalls, it saves them from spiritual pitfalls and blunders.

Indeed the Chofetz Chaim did not only write the popular sefarim "Chofetz Chaim" and "Mishneh Brurah". He wrote many sefarim of mussar and hashkafa. They are all important sources that give a Torah perspective and guide us. But there was much more to the Chofetz Chaim. In his lifetime he was able to interpret world events and explain what they really meant and their significance to us. He even was able to predict what was soon to happen. We may still have his sefarim to learn from but we no longer have the sagacious insight and advice that he had to offer. With his demise that torch was extinguished.

The Mesillas Yeshrim presents a very similar *mashal*. There was a huge maze with walls made of bushes and trees that people would walk through. This maze led to a huge hall, but its paths were winding and confusing. While one is actually inside the maze he has no idea where he was or where he was going. People could get lost in it for days. However, one who successfully maneuvered his way through it would be able to advise them. If they would listen, the route would be navigable; but if they won't, then they're on their own. That is the world we live in. It is a huge and confusing maze. If we don't have righteous and scholarly mentors who can guide us, we will flounder.

The Gemara in Bava Metzia (83b) provides us with a different metaphor. It cites the pasuk in Tehillim (104,20): "'You make darkness and it is night.' This refers to our world which is like night". How true does this metaphor resonate today! The world is submerged in the darkness of atheism, immorality and widespread terrorism. Mankind has no compass – spiritual, political or emotional.

Perhaps the directive in Pirkei Avos (1,6), "Make for yourself a *rav*" means much more than to acquire someone to teach you Torah. It means to seek out a pious Torah scholar who can light the way for you in this world of darkness. We all need a torch to guide us through the night until we reach the dawn that is the World to Come.

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments

QUESTION: Every ליל שבת we put a bunch of knaidlach in a net and then into our pot of chicken soup. We take out the bag onto a plate and open the bag and serve everyone a knaidel. If there are left over, may we put them back into the pot which we then put away into the fridge for Sunday night leftovers.

ANSWER: The pot of chicken soup, even after it is taken off the fire, still remains a כלי ראשון as long as it is still יד סולדת, and it has the power to cook. The knaidlach are a cooked food and the rule of אין בישול אחר בישול would apply, which would mean, you are allowed to put them even directly into a כלי ראשון. However, if there is liquid with the knaidlach which already cooled off, then you are not allowed to put that liquid back into the כלי ראשון soup pot. Since for liquids the rule is יש בישול אחר בישול, the pot which is a כלי ראשון will cook the cold liquid. So, if the knaidlach are dry, even if they are cold, they may be put back into the pot even if the soup in the pot is still יד סולדת. If they are dripping wet, one must wait until the pot cools down below יד סולדת. If the knaidlach are cold and moist but no liquid is dripping from them, it is also okay to put them back even into a hot pot.

עי' סימן שי"ח סעי' ט' וסעי' ד'

BIDDING AGAINST HIMSELF

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Elul has begun, which means Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are approaching. This week's dilemma actually comes from the very apex of the Yom Tov season, Simchas Torah. It is a fascinating question that also fits the spirit of Elul, because Simchas Torah is the goal and culmination of Elul.

There was a Yid we'll call Reb Dovid. Every year, Reb Dovid had a special minhag. He would try to purchase Chasan Torah, the final aliyah of the Torah, when the congregation finishes reading the entire Torah on Simchas Torah. It meant a great deal to him, and most years he succeeded in buying it. In his shul, the aliyos and other kibbudim were auctioned off on Shemini Atzeres. Chasan Torah was one of the most valuable honors, and the bidding could sometimes reach several thousand dollars.

One year, Reb Dovid knew that he would not be present for the auction. An emergency would keep him away from shul. So he approached a good friend. "Would you please bid on Chasan Torah for me?" "Of course," his friend replied. "How high should I go?" "I usually spend around $2,000," Reb Dovid said, "but if necessary, you can go as high as $4,000. That is my absolute maximum." His friend agreed.

Later that day, however, Reb Dovid began thinking again about the auction. He was so preoccupied with being away that he completely forgot he had already arranged for someone to bid for him. He met another friend and made the same request. "Could you bid on Chasan Torah for me? I usually pay around $2,000, but you can go up to as much as $4,000 if you have to." "No problem," the second friend said.

Shemini Atzeres arrived, and the auction began. The bids for Chasan Torah climbed quickly. "One thousand!" "Fifteen hundred!" "Eighteen hundred!" "Two thousand!" At around $2,000, most of the shul stopped bidding. But two men continued. "$2,100!" "$2,200!" "$2,300!" Each one was determined to win the Aliyah for Reb Dovid. Neither realized that the man bidding against him was working for the very same person!

The price kept rising. "$2,800!" "$3,000!" "$3,500!" Finally, one of them called out, "$4,000!" The other friend immediately stopped. Four thousand dollars was also his limit. The auction was over. Reb Dovid had won Chasan Torah for $4,000.

Later, Reb Dovid heard the good news. "You got it?" "Yes!" "Wonderful. How much?" "Four thousand dollars." "Four thousand?!" Reb Dovid exclaimed. "Why did it go so high?" His friend explained, "Everyone else dropped out at about $2,000, but there was one fellow who just would not stop bidding against me."

Suddenly, Reb Dovid remembered. He had asked two different people to bid for him. In reality, once the rest of the shul stopped bidding, Reb Dovid might have won Chasan Torah for only a little more than $2,000. The only reason the price reached $4,000 was because his two agents had unknowingly bid against each other.

The question was brought to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. Does Reb Dovid have to pay the full $4,000? On one hand, he clearly authorized each friend to bid up to $4,000. Both men followed his instructions exactly, and the winning bid was within the amount he had agreed to spend. On the other hand, the entire increase from around $2,000 to $4,000 came from an obvious mistake. Reb Dovid never intended to compete against himself! Perhaps this could be considered a mekach ta'us, a
transaction made in error, and he should only have to pay a bit more than $2,000, which was approximately what the highest genuine competing bidder had offered.

Is Reb Dovid responsible for the full $4,000 because his own shluchim, his own agents, caused the bidding war? Or should the extra amount be disregarded because the "competition" was never real? What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Nedarim Page 687

Regarding last Weekly's question about the shidduch for a boy who was "sitting and learning," Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Nedarim, page 680) initially wanted to answer that the shadchan should not be paid anything because he actually offered the opposite of what she wanted. However, Rav Zilberstein asked this question to his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, and Rav Chaim said that the shadchan should be paid because anyone can do teshuvah at any moment, even in a single moment, and become someone who is sitting and learning.

I WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED ALL OF THEM TO THINK THAT I SIMPLY WALKED BY YOU WITHOUT GREETING YOU by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

My dear friend Rabbi Shraga Freedman told the following story.

Rav Yosef Zimbal, rav of the West Gate kehillah in Lakewood, NJ, met Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky א"שליט, Rosh Yeshivah of the Philadelphia Yeshivah, at a wedding. Before the chuppah, Rav Zimbal had a lengthy conversation with the Rosh Yeshivah, yet, after the chuppah was over, when Rav Kamenetsky passed him, he greeted Rav Zimbal effusively, as if he were seeing him for the first time.

Rav Zimbal respectfully pointed out that they had already conversed. "I am aware of that, of course," Rav Kamenetsky replied with a smile, "but there are many more people in the vicinity now who are not aware of that. I wouldn't have wanted all of them to think that I simply walked by you without greeting you."

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Good Shabbos!